

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00623 01 OF 03 011248Z

45

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 EB-11 OMB-01

DRC-01 FEA-02 TRSE-00 ACDA-19 IGA-02 COME-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 AGR-20 /242 W

----- 034496

R 011120Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4355

INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY NOUAKACHOTT

USINT DAMASCUS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY SANAA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 TUNIS 0623

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN-LIBYAN MERGER: A REASSESSMENT

THREE WEEKS AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TUNIS 00623 01 OF 03 011248Z

SUMMARY: DESPITE QADHAFI'S DRAMATIC FLIGHT TO GENEVA TO SEE BOURGUIBA LATE LAST WEEK, OUR ESTIMATE CONTINUES TO BE THAT TRUE POLITICAL UNWON BETWEEN TUNISIA AND LIBYA IS UNLIKELY FOR SOME TIME TO COME. FACTORS PRESENTLY IN FAVOR OF UNION ARE OUTWEIGHED BY THOSE AGAINST LATTER INCLUDE CENTRIFUGAL ARAB NATURE, IMCOMPATIBILITY OF RESPECTIVE SOCIETIES, DIVERGENT POLITICAL ORIENTATION AND STRONG OPPOSITION TO MERGER ON PART OF MOST OF TUNISIAN POLITICAL ESTABLISHMENT, AS WELL AS THAT OF ALGERIA. WE CAN EXPECT, HOWEVER, INCREASED TUNISIAN-LIBYAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND PERHAPS CERTAIN SYMBOLIC TRAPPINGS OF UNITY. EVENTS SURROUNDING MERGER ANNOUNCEMENT MAY HAVE WEAKENED SOMEWHAT FABRIC OF TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT: (A) BOURGUIBA'S PRESTIGE AND CREDIBILITY HAVE BEEN CALLED TO QUESTION: (B) THERE IS POLARIZATION ON INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE BETWEEN NOUIRA AND MASMOUDI: (C) OTHER AMBITIOUS POLITICIANS LIKELY TO CAPITALIZE ON SITUATION TO JOCKEY MORE ACTIVELY FOR POSITION OF STRENGTH: (D) LIBYA'S CAPACITY FOR SUBVERSION MAY IN MONTHS AHEAD BE ENHANCED AND (E) AROUSED EXPECTATIONS OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN POPULACE HAVE BEEN UNREQUITED. NEVERTHE LESS, SECURITY FORCES CAN BE COUNTED ON TO "KEEP LID ON," AND SENIOR MILITARY LEADERSHIP WILL NO DOUBT REMAIN LOYAL TO BOURGUIBA OR, AT LEAST, TO EXISTING GOVERNMENT. MEANWHILE, ALGERIA'S INFLUENCE MAY INCREASE AS COUNTERWEIGHT TO QADHAFI'S PRESSURE. WHILE TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT MAY IN FUTURE AND ON OCCASION AVOID TAKING POSITIONS WHICH MIGHT OFFEND QADHAFI, GOT WILL WISH TO MAINTAIN EXISTING CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. ANY INDICATION OF

LESSENING USG INTEREST IN TUNISIA AT THIS JUNCTURE, OR ABRUPT REDUCTION OF US PROGRAMS, RISKS WEAKENING EXISTING MODERATE, PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP WHICH POSITS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH U.S. AS ONE OF MAIN PILLARS OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY. SINCE CONTINUATION OF THIS LEADERSHIP CONFORMS WITH U.S. INTERESTS, WE ADVOCATE NO CHANGE IN OUR POLICY TOWARD OR PROGRAMS IN TUNISIA RATHER WE SHOULD HAVE HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF DIFFICULTIES FACING THIS REGIME AS IT SEEKS TO AVOID QADHAFI'S CLUTCHES, DEALS WITH INTERNAL RUMBLINGS AND PLANS FOR POST-BOURGUIBA PERIOD. AS LONG AS BOURGUIBA IS AROUND AND HE BACKS NOUIRA, PROSPECTS FOR

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TUNIS 00623 01 OF 03 011248Z

SUCCESS ON ALL THREE COUNTS ARE GOOD. AFTERWARDS WE CAN EXPECT CHANGE BUT PROBABLY NOTHING RADICAL, AT LEAST IN IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF BOURGUIBA'S DEMISE. END SUMMARY.

2. PROSPECTS FOR UNION. DESPITE QADHAFI'S DRAMATIC FLIGHT TO GENEVA TO SEE BOURGUIBA LATE LAST WEEK, OUR ESTIMATE CONTINUES TO BE THAT TRUE POLITICAL UNION BETWEEN TUNISIA AND LIBYA IS UNLIKELY FOR SOME TIME TO COME. FACTORS IN

FAVOR OF REAL UNION, I.E. FUSION OF DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS
AND FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICIES, ARE OUTWEIGHED BY FACTORS
AGAINST.

1. IN FAVOR ARE: (A) COMPLEMENTARITY OF TWO COUNTRIES'
RESOURCES AND LONG-TERM NEEDS (TUNISIANS HAVE TRAINED CADRE,
TECHNICAL EXPERTISE, AND LARGE NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED; LIBYANS
HAVE OIL, MONEY, GREATER JOB OPPORTUNITIES, AND NEED FOR
QUALIFIED MANPOWER) (B) BOURGUIBA'S APPETITE FOR GRATER
GLORY (HE WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO BE TEMPTED BY
PROSPECT OF BECOMING PRESIDENT OF A UNION WHICH OFFERS
HIM MORE INFLUENCE WITHIN ARAB WORLD AND ELSEWHERE THAN
IS NOW THE CASE) (C) QADHAFI'S DETERMINATION TO "UNIONIZE"
(IF HE DOESN'T GET HIS WAY, HE COULD CONCEIVABLY CAJOLE
AND THREATEN TUNISIANS INTO BENDING A BIT TO HIS WILL)
(D) POPULARITY OF MERGER PROPOSAL AMONG SOME TUNISIAN

LEADERS AND ELEMENTS OF RANK AND FILE, WHO DREAM UNDOUBTEDLY
OF SHARING IN LIBYAN"RICHERS" OR WHO ARE ATTRACTED BY
LIBYA'S RELIGIOUS CONSERVATISM (THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT WITH
GOT'S BACKTRACKING HAS POSSIBLE POTENTIAL FOR FORCING
GOT'S HAND) (E) TRIBAL-FAMILY TIES BETWEEN SOUTHERN-
EASTERN TUNISIANS AND WESTERN LIBYANS (BOURGUIBA HIMSELF
HAS CLAIMED HIS ANCESTORS CAME FROM LIBYA).

B. FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST MERGER ARE: (A)

CENTRIFUGAL ARAB NATURE WHICH HAS THUS FAR EFFECTIVELY
TORPEDOED ALL PREVIOUS ARAB MERGER EFFORTS AND IS LIKELY TO
CONTINUE TO BE A FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE FOR YEARS TO COME:

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00623 02 OF 03 011215Z

45

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 EB-11 OMB-01

DRC-01 FEA-02 TRSE-00 ACDA-19 IGA-02 COME-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 AGR-20 /242 W

----- 034220

R 011120Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SCSTATE WASHDC 4356

INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY NOUAKACHOTT

USINT DAMASCUS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY SANAA

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 3 TUNIS 0623

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY

SUBJECT: TUNISIAN-LIBYAN MERGER: A REASSESSMENT

THREE WEEKS AFTER ANNOINCEMENT.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TUNIS 00623 02 OF 03 011215Z

(B) INCOMPATIBILITY OF RESPECTIVE SOCIETIES (TUNISIA'S OPEN, MORE RELAXED, PERMISSIVE SOCIETY VERSUS QADHAFI'S WAHABI-LIKE ISLAMIC AMBIANCE); (C) DIVERGENT POLITICAL ORIENTATION (ON ONE HAND CIVILIAN-DOMINATED, CONSTITUTIONALLY-BASED GOVERNMENT OF TUNISIA PURSUES MODERATE, PRAGMATIC POLICIES; ON OTHER HAND, MILITARY REGIME OF LIBYAN ADVOCATED RADICAL SOLUTIONS, INCLUDING ELIMINATION OF ISRAEL AND SUPPORT OF PALESTINIAN TERRORISM, AND OPPOSES GOOD RELATIONS WITH US); (D) STRONG OPPOSITION TO MERGER ON PART OF MOST OF TUNISIAN POLITICAL AND MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT (AMONG REASONS: REALIZATION BY MANY TUNISIANS THAT MERGER COULD SERIOUSLY DISRUPT TUNISIAN ECONOMY WHICH BASED TO LARGE EXTENT ON COOPERATION WITH WEST IN TRANSFER OF CAPITAL AND TECHNOLOGY, E.G. EEC TIES, AND ON WESTERN TRADE AND TOURISM); (E) STRONG OPPOSITION OF ALGERIA, TUNISIA'S LARGER AND MORE POWERFUL WESTERN NEIGHBOR (NOT ONLY CAN NOT GOT NOT RPT NOT AFFORD TO IGNORE

GOA'S VIEWPOINT BECAUSE OF ALGERIA'S STRENGTH, BUT TUNISIANS RESIDING IN NORTHWEST TUNISIA MAY BE SUSCEPTIBLE TO ALGERIAN INFLUENCE;; (F) LUKEWARM INTERNATIONAL REACTION, INCLUDING THAT OF NUMBER OF ARAB COUNTRIES.

C. ANALYSIS OF FOREGOING FACTORS LEADS TO CONCLUSION THAT FACTORS AGAINST OUTWEIGHT FACTORS FOR LIBYAN-TUNISIAN UNION. COMPLEMENTARITY OF TWO COUNTRIES' RESOURCES AND NEED (A(A)) IN NO WAY REPRESENT AN IMPERATIVE -- FOR EXAMPLE, SINCE TUNISIAN ECONOMY IS EXPECTED TO DO WELL THIS COMING YEAR, NEED FOR LIBYAN RESOURCES IS NOT IMMEDIATELY ACUTE. BOURGUIBA'S APPETITE FOR GLORY (A(B)) IS CONTROLLABLE, AS HIS SUDDEN TURN-AROUND ON UNION HAS ALREADY DEMONSTRATED, AND WITH NOUIRA AT HIS SIDE HE IS SENSIBLE ENOUGH TO REALIZE THE PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS OF TOO CLOSE AFFILIATION WITH QADHAIF, IT IS MOOT QUESTION WHETHER QADHAFI, IN POSSIBLE ANGER AND FRUSTRATION AT FAILURE TO UNITE NOW, MIGHT TURN AGAINST TUNISIA (A(C)). WE SUPPOSE, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS JUST POSSIBLE THAT -- AS IN CASE OF HIS ACQUIESCENT REACTION TO CONFRONTATION WITH BOURGUIBA AT TUNIS PALMARIUM IN DECEMBER 1972 -- QADHAFI MIGHT SIT TIGHT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TUNIS 00623 02 OF 03 011215Z

AND REFRAIN FROM MOBILIZING HIS RESOURCES FOR USE AGAINST TUNISIA. WHILE DISAPPOINTED THAT UNION HAS NOT RPT NOT BEEN ACHIEVED, HE MIGHT FEEL THAT HIS SHOCK TREATMENT HAS AT LAST (APPARENTLY) MOVED TUNISIANS DOWN UNION PATH. THIS REACTION WOULD BE ENHANCED IF TUNISIANS CONTINUE TO TALK UP UNION AND GO THROUGH MOTIONS OF MOVING IN THAT DIRECTION, AS THEY EVIDENTLY INTEND TO DO. FINALLY, POPULARITY OF MERGER AMONG MANY TUNISIANS (A, (D)) AND (E) IS IN ITSELF UNLIKELY TO INDUCE GOT TO CHANGE ITS MIND. ON CONTRARY, ANY PUBLIC MANIFESTATIONS IN FAVOR OF UNION ARE LIKELY TO BE SUPPRESSED SWIFTLY AND EFFECTIVELY. (NEVERTHELESS, ONE SHOULD NOTE THAT OVER LONG RUN, REPRESSIVE SECURITY MEASURES TEND TO CREAT MORE PROBLEMS THAN THEY SOLVE.)

3. WHAT WE CAN EXPECT.

A. ECONOMIC COOPERATION. - THOUGH UNION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN CARDS, WE CAN EXPECT AN INCREASE IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES -- A PROCESS ALREADY WELL UNDERWAY DURING PAST YEAR. ALSO, FOR PURPOSES OF SYMBOLISM -- WHICH PERHAPS IS MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE OF MERGER ANNOUNCEMENT -- TUNISIANS AND LIBYANS MAY NOMINALLY UNITE CERTAIN FUNCTIONS OR SERVICES. FOR EXAMPLE, WE CAN CONCEIVE OF TWO AIRLINES

BEING MERGED IN NAME, WF NOT IN FACT.

B. POSSIBLE WEAKENING OF TUNISIAN REGIME. IT
WOULD APPEAR THAT EVENTS SURROUNDING THE MERGER ANNOUNCE-
MENT MAY HAVE WEAKENED SOMEWHAT THE FABRIC OF THE TUNISIAN

GOVERNMENT. THE TOTALLY UNEXPECTED MERGER ANNOUNCEMENT,
FOLLOWED QUICKLY BY WHAT ALMOST EVERYONE SEES AS A CLEAR
REVERSAL OF DIRECTION, NOT ONLY TARNISHES BOURGUIBA'S
PRESTIGE ABROAD, BUT IT AROUSES FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION IN
MINDS OF TUNISIANS AS TO HIS SUITABILITY TO CONTINUE TO
RULE. HOW, MOST PEOPLE ASK, COULD HE HAVE SO SUDDENLY
AGREED TO MERGER AFTER HAVING FOR SO LONG PREACHED
THAT THIS UNITY IS ACHIEVABLE ONLY OVER LONG PERIOD AND
BY STAGES? HIS UNPREDICTABLE ACTION REINFORCES
GENERAL BELIEF THAT AS HE GROWS OLD BOURGUIBA IS TENDING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 TUNIS 00623 02 OF 03 011215Z

TO LISTEN TO WHOMEVER TALKS TO HIM LAST. ADDED TO THIS IS
DRAMATIC POLARIZATION ON INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE BETWEEN
PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA AND FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER MASMOUDI.
FOR MOMENT NOUIRA HAS LEVERS OF POWER IN HIS OWN HANDS
BUT HE HAS THROWN DOWN THE GAUNTLET TO MASMOUDI -- AND
ONE OF THESE DAYS LATTER IS GOING TO PICK IT UP. HOW
MASMOUDI REACTS MAY DEPEND TO EXTENT ON QADHAFI, BUT,
WHETHER OR NOT MASMOUDI IS SUPPORTED BY QADHAFI, MASMOUDI
REPRESENTS AN OPPOSING POLITICAL FORCE WITH WHICH NOUIRA
MUST INCREASINGLY RECKON. AT SAME TIME OTHER TUNISIAN
LEADERS WITH STRONG POLITICAL AMBITIONS FOR THE FUTURE CAN
BE EXPECTED IN MONTHS AHEAD TO CAPITALIZE ON SITUATION TO

JOCKEY MORE ACTIVELY FOR POSITION OF STRENGTH. ALSO, AS
TUNISIA CONCENTRATES MORE CLOSELY WITH LIBYA, EVEN IF NOT IN UNION,

SECRET

NNN

SECRET

PAGE 01 TUNIS 00623 03 OF 03 011341Z

45
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-11 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 EB-11 OMB-01

DRC-01 FEA-02 TRSE-00 ACDA-19 IGA-02 COME-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 AGR-20 /242 W

----- 035023

R 011120Z FEB 74 ZFG
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4357
INFO AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
USINO ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY PARISIZETYI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY NOUAKACHOTT
USINT DAMASCUS
USINT BAGHDAD
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY SANAA

S E C R E T SECTION 3 OF 3 TUNIS 0623

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY
SUBJECT: TUNISIAN-LIBYAN MERGER: A REASSESSMENT
THREE WEEKS AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 TUNIS 00623 03 OF 03 011341Z

CAPACITY FOR LIBYAN SUBVERSION IS PRESUMEABLY ENHANCED.
FINALLY, WHILE WE FULLY EXPECT THAT SECURITY FORCES
WILL "KEEP LID ON" AND WHILE SENIOR MILITARY LEADERSHIP
WILL NO DOUBT REMAIN LOYAL TO BOURGUIBA, AROUSED
EXPECTATIONS OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN POPULACE HAVE BEEN
UNREQUITED. THERE IS ALWAYS THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY OF
THE EMERGENCE OF A YOUNG OFFICER "ON HORSEBACK", BUT
THIS IS UNLIKELY. THERE IS CERTAINLY NO CAUSE FOR ALARM,
BUT WE MUST RECKON WITH POSSIBILITY THAT RECENT EVENTS
HAVE SOMEWHAT WEAKENED TUNISIAN REGIME. (REVERSE IS ALSO
POSSIBLE ALTHOUGH WE CONSIDER IS TO BE LESS LIKELY, I.E.

QADHAFI MENACE MAY SOLIDIFY RANKS OF GOT LEADERSHIP
FOR TASK OF PREPARING ITSELF
FOR POST-BOURGUIBA PERIOD.)

C. POSSIBLE INCREASE IN ALGERIAN INFLUENCE. IT
IS TOO EARLY TO PREDICT WHETHER BOUMEDIENNE'S
CONTRIBUTORY ROLE IN TORPEDOING UNION WILL LEAD TO GREATER
ALGERIAN INFLUENCE IN TUNISIA. BUT GIVEN INTENSITY
OF ALGERIAN CONCERN AT UNION ANNOUNCEMENT, WE WOULD
NOT BE SURPRISED IF ALGERIA TOOK INITIATIVE TO CEMENT ITS
RELATIONS WITH TUNISIA, OR TAKE OTHER MEASURES TO COUNTER
QADHAFI'S BLANDISHMENTS. (WE INVITE ALGIERS' COMMENT.)
SOME TUNISIAN RECEPTIVITY TO POSSIBLE ALGERIAN OVERTURES
CAN BE PREDICTED: WE HAVE HEARD MANY TUNISIANS EXPRESS
VIEW THAT ALGERIA IS MORE LOGICAL BEDFELLOW FOR TUNISIA
THAN LIBYA. ON OTHER HAND, TUNISIANS WHO WELCOME UNITY
AS OPPORTUNITY TO EXERCISE WHAT THEY THINK WOULD BE PRE-
DOMINANT INFLUENCE OVER THEIR PARTNER (LIBYA) ARE BEARISH
ABOUT MERGER WITH MORE POPULOUS AND MORE POWERFUL ALGERIA.

D. FOREIGN GOVERNMENT "WAIT-AND-SEE" ATTITUDES.
MERGER ANNOUNCEMENT, DESPITE EVIDENT BACKTRACKING, IS
CAUSING SOME FOREIGN COUNTRIES WHO DO BUSINESS WITH TUNISIA
TO STAND BACK AND REVIEW THEIR "INVESTMENTS" IN
LIGHT OF IMPLICATION EITHER (A) THAT QADHAFI'S PROPENSITY
FOR NATIONALIZATION AND "SOCIALISM" MIGHT BE ABSORBED BY
TUNISIA: OR (B) THAT QADHAFI'S FINANCIAL RESOURCES MAKE
OTHER OUTSIDE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UN-
NECESSARY. GOT IS DOING ITS BEST TO SET RECORD
STRAIGHT IN THIS REGARD. BOTH PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 TUNIS 00623 03 OF 03 011341Z

OF INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY HAVE PRONOUNCED IN TERMS
LOUD AND CLEAR THAT ALL COMMITMENTS WILL BE HONORED AND
THAT CLIMATE AND DESIRE FOR OUTSIDE BUSINESS, ECONOMIC AND
FINANCIAL UNDERTAKINGS WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED. NEVERTHELESS,
IF GOT CONTINUES TO GO THROUGH MOTIONS OF MOVING TOWARD
UNION, TUNISIA'S ATTRACTIVENESS TO FOREIGN INVESTORS MAY
WELL DIMINISH AND ITS NEED FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC AID COULD
BE INCREASINGLY QUESTIONED.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY.

A. APPARENT TUNISIAN AMBIVALENCE BUT CONTINUED
PRO-U.S. POSTURE. MASMOUDI'S RATHER CONFUSED
PUBLIC ALLEGATIONS THAT USG WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN HIS
DOWNFALL HAVE CAUSED SCARCELY A RIPPLE IN TUNISIA. WE
DO NOT BELIEVE THEY GAINED CURRENCY AMONG MEMBERS OF GOT
POWER STRUCTURE NOR DO WE THINK THAT EVEN MASMOUDI LENDS

CREDENCE TO THEM, ALTHOUGH HE HELPED SPREAD THE STORY PRESUMABLY TO ADVANCE HIS OWN POLITICAL FUTURE. TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT, MEANWHILE, IS GOING TO FIND ITSELF IN SEEMINGLY AMBIVALENT POSITION OF (A) SEEKING TO ASSURE US THAT NOTHING HAS CHANGED AND THAT CLOSE TUNISIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP SHOULD CONTINUE IN ALL ITS ASPECTS: AND (B) OF PROTESTING PUBLICLY, MAINLY FOR QADHAFI'S BENEFIT, THAT WHAT LOOKS LIKE A REVERSAL OF POLICY IS NOTHING MORE THAN A GRADUALISTIC APPROACH TO ULTIMATE UNION. IN THIS SITUATION, GOT WILL BE SENSITIVE TO ANYTHING THAT SUGGESTS LESSENING OF TUNISIAN INTEREST IN U.S. (OR LESSENING OF USG INTEREST IN TUNISIA). AT SAME TIME, REALIZING THAT IT IS IN A SENSE "DOUBLECROSSING" QADHAFI BY HAVING BACKED AWAY FROM UNION, GOT WILL PROBABLY BE ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE TO LIBYAN CRITICISM -- AND MAY OCCASIONALLY FEEL IT HAS TO TAKE POSITIONS THAT IT WOULD NOT RPT NOT NORMALLY TAKE IN ORDER NOT RPT NOT TO OFFEND QADHAFI. BUT GOT WILL CONTINUE TO ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO ITS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. IT WILL COUNT ON CONTINUED UMS. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SUPPLEMENTED BY CONCESSIONAL FOOD ASSISTANCE AND LOANS WHERE POSSIBLE, AND IT WILL TRY JUST AS HARD AS EVER TO ATTRACT U.S. INVESTMENTS.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 TUNIS 00623 03 OF 03 011341Z

B. WHAT WE SHOULD DO. IF WE ASSUME, WHICH THIS EMBASSY DOES, THAT MAINTENANCE OF A MODERATE, PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP AT THE TUNISIAN HELM IS IN U. S. INTERESTS, WE SHOULD DO NOTHING TO CHANGE OUR POLICIES TOWARD OR OUR PROGRAMS IN TUNISIA. ANY INDICATION OF A LESSENING OF USG INTEREST IN TUNISIA AT THIS JUNCTURE, OR THE ABRUPT REDUCTION IN U.S. PROGRAMS, RISKS WEAKENING EXISTING LEADERSHIP WHICH POSITS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH U.S. AS ONE OF MAIN PILLARS OF ITS FOREIGN POLICY. FURTHERMORE, IMPORTANT U.S. INTERESTS IN LIBYA WOULD BE SERVED IF TUNISIAN LEADERSHIP SUCCEEDS IN ITS PRESENT EFFORTS TO EXERT MODERATING INFLUENCE ON LIBYA THROUGH INCREASED COOPERATION. THOSE TUNISIANS WHO OPPOSE SPREAD OF QADHAFISM TO TUNISIA THROUGH UNION WITH LIBYA ARE GENERALLY THOSE WHO FAVOR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S., AND THEY NEED OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME. SO WE ADVOCATE NO CHANGE IN OUR POLICY TOWARD TUNISIA, BUT RATHER A HEIGHTENED AWARENESS OF THE DIFFICULTIES FACING THIS REGIME AS IT SEEKS TO AVOID QADHAFI'S CLUTCHES, DEALS WITH POSSIBLE INTERNAL RUMBLINGS AND PLANS FOR POST-BOURGUIBA PERIOD. AS LONG AS BOURGUIBA IS AROUND AND HE BACKS NOUIRA, PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS ON ALL THREE COUNTS ARE GOOD. AFTER THAT, THE FUTURE BECOMES MORE PROBLEMATIC, BUT EVEN THEN WE TEND TO DOUBT ANY RADICAL

CHANGE -- AT LEAST IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF
BOURGUIBA'S DEMISE.
SEELYE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FEDERATION, FOREIGN RELATIONS, SECURITY, ECONOMIC STABILITY, GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, CAPITAL (FIN ANCE), INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 FEB 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: rowelle0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TUNIS00623
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740260/aaaaceld.tel
Line Count: 496
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 10
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: rowelle0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 APR 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <27-Sep-2002 by rowelle0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TUNISIAN-LIBYAN MERGER: A REASSESSMENT THREE WEEKS AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT.
TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY, (BOURGUIBA, HABIB), (QADHAFI, MU'AMMAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005